

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH PIERRE SALINGER

OCTOBER 26, 1962

4:55 P.M. EDT

FRIDAY

MP SALINGER: Let me first dispose of the routine matters, a number of routine matters I have, and then I want to read a statement.

First, the President has previously declared a majordisaster in the State of Mississippi, as a result of the sinking of a chlorine barge. Today he has authorized the Director of the Office of Emergency Planning to allocate \$450,000 in Federal assistance in connection with that plan.

Q. How much was that?

MR. SALINGER: \$450,000.

Q. Where was that barge, again, Pierre?

MR. SALINGER: In the Natchez River -- excuse me. The Mississippi River near Natchez, Mississippi.

The President also recently declared a major disaster in the State of California, and he has authorized the allocation of \$500,000 for that disaster. That is as a result of floods and severe storms beginning on or about October 10th.

You have the exchange of letters with President Goulart, which brings about the postponement of the President's November 12th trip to Brazil.

Q. These are not dated.

MR. SALINGER: They are dated yesterday, I believe.

Q. Both letters?

MR. SALINGER: No. Our letter is dated yesterday. I have the schedule for tomorrow.

9:30 - His Excellency Ellis Emmanuel Innocent Clarke, newly appointed Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago to present his credentials.

11:30 - The President will meet with the Civil Defense Committee of the Governors' Conference. Those who have already indicated they will attend are Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York, Governor Edmund Brown of California, Governor Elmer L. Andersen of Minnesota, Governor George Clyde of Utah, Governor Albert D. Rosellini of Washington, and Governor John A. ...

Q. Do you have a title for the General?

MR. SALINGER: Civil Defense Director of the State of Rhode Island.

Q. You haven't heard from those three --

MR. SALINGER: We don't know whether they are coming or not.

Q. These people are meeting at the Pentagon?

MR. SALINGER: They are meeting at the Pentagon; that is right.

Q. The meeting was called by Governor Rockefeller at the Pentagon. Did he do so at the request of the President or on his own initiative?

MR. SALINGER: I understand the meeting was called by Mr. Pittman, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense. He asked Governor Rockefeller to set up such a meeting with the Defense officials.

Q. In giving us the schedule, you omitted the usual 10 o'clock meeting.

MR. SALINGER: There is a 10 o'clock meeting. That is just assumed unless otherwise.

Q. Do you know Pittman's name offhand?

MR. SALINGER: Stewart.

Q. What time is the briefing tomorrow?

MR. SALINGER: Tomorrow the first briefing will be at noon.

Q. Is there any connection between the meeting on civil defense and the Cuban crisis?

MR. SALINGER: Very definitely.

Q. What was the answer?

MR. SALINGER: Very definitely.

Q. What was the question?

MR. SALINGER: The question was whether there was any connection between the meeting and the Cuban crisis.

Q. You said you would have something later today --

MR. SALINGER: If you will, just wait a minute.

I will now read you a statement. This is a

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Q. You said you would have something later today --

MR. SALINGER: If you will, just wait a minute.

I will now read you a statement. This is a White House statement.

"The development of ballistic missile sites in Cuba continues at a rapid pace. Through the process of continued surveillance directed by the President, additional evidence has been acquired which clearly reflects that as of Thursday, October 25, definite build-ups in these offensive missile sites continued to be made. The activity at these sites apparently is directed at achieving a full operational

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capability as soon as possible. There is evidence that as of yesterday, October 25th" --

Q. Does the statement repeat the date?

MR. SALINGER: ". . .yesterday, October 25th, considerable construction activity was being engaged in at the intermediate range ballistic missile sites. Bulldozers and cranes were observed as late as Thursday actively clearing new areas within the sites and improving the approach roads to the launch pads.

"Since Tuesday, October 23, missile-related activities have continued at the medium range ballistic missile sites, resulting in progressive refinements at these facilities. For example, missiles were observed parked in the open on October 23. Surveillance on October 25th revealed that some of these same missiles have now been moved from their original parked positions. Cabling can be seen running from the missile ready tents to power generators nearby.

"In summary, there is no evidence to date indicating that there is any intention to dismantle or discontinue work on these missile sites. On the contrary, the Soviets are rapidly continuing their construction of missile support and launch facilities, and serious attempts are underway to camouflage their efforts."

Q. Is that the end?

MR. SALINGER: That is the end.

Q. Is that a White House statement?

MR. SALINGER: That is a White House statement.

Q. What does the United States propose to do about this?

MR. SALINGER: I am going to stand on this statement, Bill.

Q. We have no reports up through today. This ends as of yesterday, this surveillance?

MR. SALINGER: The statement speaks for itself.

Q. Are these later pictures going to be made public, Pierre?

MR. SALINGER: That is a possibility.

Q. When?

MR. SALINGER: We are studying that at this moment.

Q. By whom?

MR. SALINGER: If they are made public, they will be made public by the Defense Department.

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Q. Did Stevenson carry the gist of this statement back to U Thant today?

MR. SALINGER: The Ambassador was made fully aware of the information on which this statement was based.

Q. Can you say how the camouflage is? Can you

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explain that any further?

MR. SALINGER: No, I would rather stay on this statement.

Q. Thank you --

Q. Wait a minute.

Do you wish to emphasize that the State Department did that sentence in the President's speech the other night about "work does not cease on these"?

MR. SALINGER: I have constantly referred to the President's speech as a starting point for all information on this subject.

Q. Is that all for tonight?

MR. SALINGER: I can't tell you that.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END